

She's got him. To have a relation of the discovery of “Zinj” by Mary Leakey you may open the little book *The Sky's the Limit: Stories of Discovery by Women and Girls* written by Catherine Thimmesh, (2002) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:41-44.

Mary Leakey has traveled to the Dordogne with her parents to visit the prehistoric caves in France. This gave her the opportunity to take an interest in remains of early humans. After having married Louis Leakey she searched with him on hands and knees in East Africa (Tanzania), fossil remains of hominids. For decades they uncovered a plethora of stone tools giving evidence that man once inhabited the area, but no significant hominid fossil. One day in 1959 “It came about that on the morning of 17 July I went out myself, with the two Dalmatians, Sally and Victoria, to see what I could find of interest. One scrap of bone that caught and held my eye was not lying loose on the surface but projecting from beneath, it seemed to be part of a skull, including a mastoid process. It had a hominid look, but the bones seemed enormously thick -too thick, surely, I carefully brushed away a little of the deposit, and then I could see parts of two large teeth in place in the upper jaw. They were hominid.” Mary announced “I’ve got him! I’ve got him!” The skull came the next nineteen days in nearly four hundred fragments. And when the specialists made the analysis the fossil they revealed a 1.75 million year-old hominid now called *Paranthropus boisei*.

Mary's son Richard Leakey remembers “They had gone down to Olduvai to excavate this site where they had found a hominid molar the year before. My father was optimistic that if they excavated the site they would find additional fragments of whatever the molar came from. And they had arranged for somebody to take photographs of the excavation with the hopes that if they did find something this would lead to a magazine article. Of course, the photographer was delayed by two days and they were simply killing time and my mother was off looking around for anything else she could find. I was with the photographer, and when we arrived in camp we were told that plans had changed and we had something really important to film.” Richard Leakey R. (2009) Zinj and the Leakeys, interview by the Archaeological Institute of America <http://archive.archaeology.org/online/interviews/leakey/>



The palate of Olduvai Hominid 5, type specimen *Paranthropus boisei* discovered by M. Leakey ©Wood Bernard